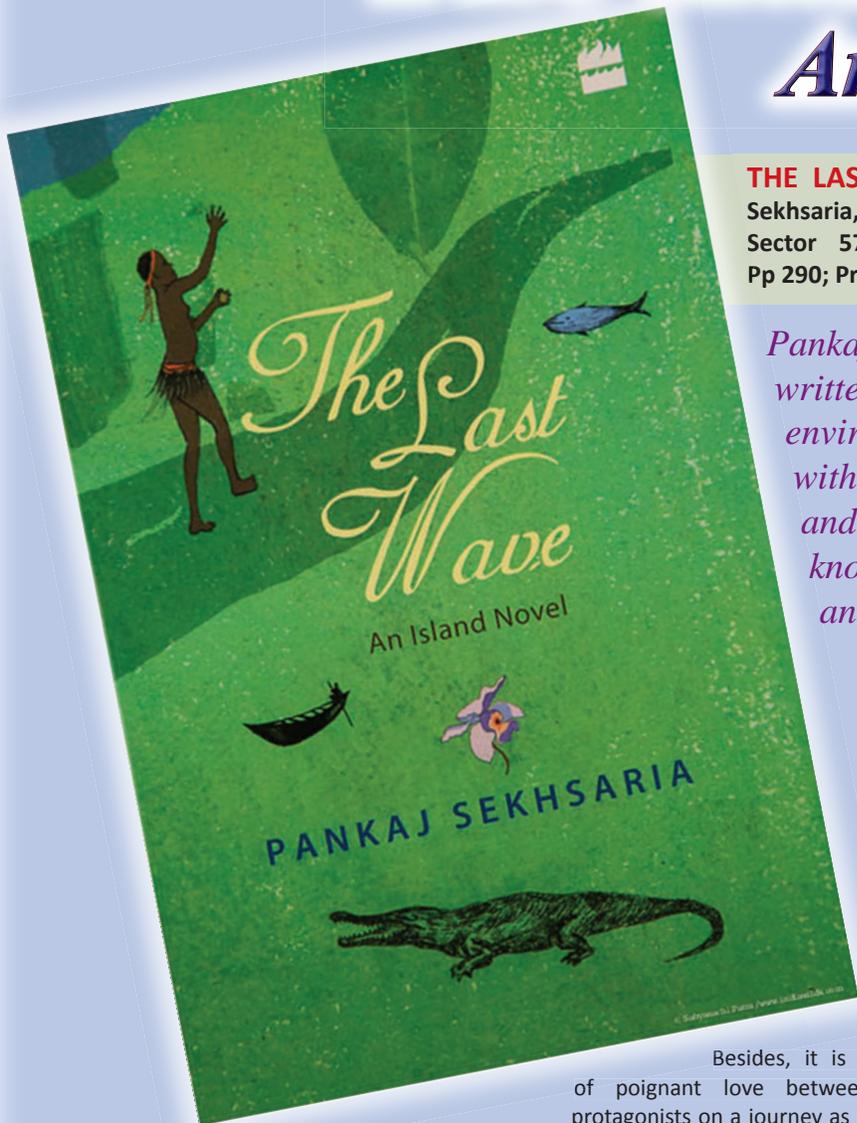


# The Last Wave: An Island Novel



**THE LAST WAVE: AN ISLAND NOVEL**, by Pankaj Sekhsaria, published by HarperCollins Publishers, A-53, Sector 57, NOIDA-201301; ISBN: 978-93-5136-191-6; Pp 290; Price: Rs 350/-, 2014

*Pankaj Sekhsaria, who has worked and written extensively in the field of the environment and of wildlife conservation with a particular focus on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, tries to weave his knowledge of the Islands most effectively and adroitly into the story.*

of the Onges and Jarawas – the last few surviving ‘jungles’, as those living in the jungles are called by the thousands of those who have come in from the mainland and occupied their forests, cutting down trees, hunting wild animals illegally, and over-fishing resources from the seas around. The Jarawas and Onges are on their way to annihilation, as Harish and Seema discover much to their discomfort. Much as they would like, there is very little that they can do to stop the wheels of destruction set in motion.

Somewhere along this turbulent journey Harish and Seema fall in love. The climax is set amidst the giant waves of the Great Tsunami of 2004 that lashed the Andaman & Nicobar Islands unleashing destruction of unimaginable proportions.

The story proceeds at a brisk pace. Pankaj Sekhsaria, who has worked and written extensively in the field of the environment and of wildlife conservation with a particular focus on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, tries to weave his knowledge of the Islands most effectively and adroitly into the story. To some extent he does succeed. Worth reading for those who would enjoy a story of exploration with large doses of environmental activism.

Hasan Jawaid Khan

**T**HE book is truly an island novel as the entire storyline is based in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. A fictional story that very deftly weaves in real-life instances of the environmental destruction of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands due to lack of foresight of the authorities and policy planners, callousness, carelessness and downright apathy of officials stationed on and around the Islands, and the losing fight for survival of civilizations poised for a complete wipe-out. The story has as its climax the great tsunami of 2004 that wrought havoc and destruction on the Islands.

Besides, it is also a story of poignant love between the two protagonists on a journey as much of self-discovery as of the unfolding ruination of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Harish, unsuccessful in academics as in his first love, gets a lifetime opportunity to visit the Islands and write stories for a magazine. Seema, an anthropology student and pursuing her PhD at Delhi University, is also a Local Born – drawing her lineage from convicts brought to the Andamans (or Kalapani) from the mainland in the 1920s.

Harish and Seema end up at the Institute for Island Ecology near Port Blair driven by their common zeal to understand the phenomena and processes that threaten to destroy the ecology of the Islands and unfold a series of events that would ultimately spell the death knell